

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 THE HAGUE 0001

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EEC, NL
SUBJ: US-EC POLITICAL CONSULTATION: THE HAGUE PRESIDENCY

1. A SENSE OF DISAPPOINTMENT STEMMING FROM UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS AND OF RELIEF TINGED NONETHELESS WITH LIMITED SATISFACTION MARKS THE MOOD IN THE HAGUE AS IT TURNS OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE EC-9 TO LONDON. THE INABILITY TO MAKE CONCRETE PROGRESS BEYOND THE DECISIONS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS LEFT A FEELING OF GENERAL FRUSTRATION. THE FAILURE OF THE SUMMIT TO ADOPT A FORTHCOMING STANCE ON ISSUES UNDER DISUCSSION IN CIEC WAS A SPECIAL DISAPPOINTMENT TO PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL AND HIS FELLOW SOCIALISTS. IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE SERIOUS DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE WEST EUROPEAN ECONOMIES, THAT THE ODDS ON PROGRESS TOWARD EUROPEAN UNITY ARE LONG. STILL, MFA OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE EC MACHINERY WORK, THOUGH PHYSICALLY WEARY FROM THE DEMANDING TREADMILL OF THE EC SCHEDULE,
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NEVERTHELESS EXHIBIT SATISFACTION THAT, DESPITE HEAVY ODDS, THEY KEPT THE SHOW ON THE ROAD AND INDEED ACHIEVED SUBSTANTIAL COORDINATION ON SOME SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUES.

2. DUTCH ORGANIZATION CANNOT BE FAULTED. THE GON DID A CONSCIENTIOUS, THOROUGH JOB OF GEARING UP FOR THE

DUTCH PRESIDENCY. IT ASSIGNED HIGHLY QUALIFIED, KEY OFFICERS TO THE VARIOUS COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS, ROUNDING UP A POOL OF FIRST-CLASS TALENT. BY LAYING TEMPORARY CLAIM TO RECENTLY RESTORED OFFICES IN THE HISTORIC BINNENHOF COMPLEX ULTIMATELY DESTINED TO HOUSE THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, THE MFA PROVIDED MORE THAN ADEQUATE, HIGHLY ORNATE QUARTERS FOR EC MEETINGS. A SOMEWHAT LESS OSTENTATIOUS BUT NONETHELESS EFFECTIVE PRESS CENTER FUNCTIONED WELL FOR A PRESS WHOSE RARE OPPORTUNITIES TO REPORT EC-9 ACTIVITIES COULD NOT DISPEL A PREVAILING SENSE OF SOLID BOREDOM.

3. SOMEHOW THE FACT OF THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY NEVER CAUGHT THE FANCY OF THE DUTCH PUBLIC. EVEN IN SUCH AN INTERNATIONALLY MINDED COUNTRY, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMANDS RELATIVELY LITTLE INTEREST AND EVEN LESS LOYALTY. IT WAS AT LEAST CONCEIVABLE THAT THE DEN UYL GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE MADE THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY A HIGH-WATER MARK OF DUTCH PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. EVENTS AND EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES WILLED OTHERWISE, WITH THE EC-9 SEEMINGLY TRAPPED IN ENDLESS PURSUIT OF ELUSIVE DECISIONS, LEAVING DEN UYL AND FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL LITTLE ON WHICH TO CAPITALIZE. EVEN THE SUMMIT FAILED TO CATCH THE IMAGINATION OF THE DUTCH PUBLIC. THE GLITTER OF THE PRESENCE IN THE HAGUE OF THE EC HEADS OF GOVERNMENT WAS DULLED BY DISMAL FALL WEATHER AND THE MOTORCADES VIRTUALLY DROWNED IN POURING RAIN. THE MOOD OF AN ALREADY SKEPTICAL PRESS CORPS, NUMBERING SOME 500 AT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SUMMIT, GREW INCREASINGLY DOUR AND INEVITABLY SURFACED IN ACCOUNTS WHICH CONFIRMED THE PUBLIC'S DOWNBEAT IMPRESSIONS.

4. THE US-EC POLITICAL DIALOGUE TOOK PLACE AGAINST THIS CHEERLESS BACKDROP OF FRUSTRATING CIRCUMSTANCES. TO A DEGREE IT WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY SOLID, EVEN SPECTACULAR SUCCESSES. THE VISIT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER ON AUGUST 14 WAS A MAJOR PUBLIC EVENT THAT WAS WIDELY APPRECIATED BY A PUBLIC VAGUELY AWARE THAT HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL VISITORS FROM THE US WERE A RARE OCCURRENCE. THE SECRETARY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL AND MINISTRY OFFICIALS CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT TO PROVIDE A SOUND BASIS FOR THE ENSUING DIALOGUE AND THE DUTCH ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMED IT FOR ITS HIGH SUBSTANTIVE VALUE. THE VISITS OF GOVERNOR SCRANTON AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN IN JULY AND NOVEMBER, RESPECTIVELY, WERE ALSO HIGHLIGHTS INVOLVING DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES BOTH

OF EC-9 AND BILATERAL CONCERN. THESE VISITS WERE COMPLEMENTED BY OTHER WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WHEN WASHINGTON OFFICIALS VISITED THE HAGUE. IN ADDITION, VAN DER STOEL AND OTHER DUTCH OFFICIALS SAW THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND BRUSSELS. THE GREATER SUBSTANCE INTRODUCED INTO THE DIALOGUE BY THESE BILATERAL CONTACTS ENHANCED DUTCH AND EC UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN POLICIES AND CONTRIBUTED IN CONSIDERABLE MEASURE TO A DUTCH DISPOSITION, AS EC PRESIDENT, TO BE ESPECIALLY RESPONSIVE TO WASHINGTON CONCERNS. THE HAGUE, AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, CONSCIENTIOUSLY PRESENTED WASHINGTON VIEWS TO THE OTHER EIGHT WITH THE NECESSARY EMPHASIS.

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5. BY CONTRAST, THE CONDUCT OF REGULAR DIALOGUE, THROUGH THIS EMBASSY, WAS LESS SATISFACTORY. THIS DID NOT REFLECT ANY FLAW IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE MINISTRY. NOR WAS THIS DUE TO DIFFICULTIES IN MAKING TIMELY CONTACTS. ON THE CONTRARY, WE ENJOYED EASY, QUICK AND HIGH-LEVEL ACCESS. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE INFORMATION THAT WE WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE FREQUENTLY FAILED TO ADD TO WHAT WAS GENERALLY KNOWN OR TO WHAT THE DUTCH OR OTHERS OF THE EC-9 ALREADY HAD ACQUIRED FROM OTHER SOURCES. THUS, THE DIALOGUE OFTEN WAS ALMOST STERILE, AMOUNTING TO LITTLE MORE THAN BOILERPLATE

STATUS REPORTS OF THE ALL-QUIET-ON-THE-WESTERN-FRONT VARIETY WHICH DID LITTLE TO ADD DEPTH TO THE DIALOGUE. THESE THE DUTCH RECEIVED GRACIOUSLY, RECOGNIZING THE WASHINGTON STYLE, BUT THEY NEVER HESITATED TO COMMENT THAT THEY HAD HOPED FOR SOMETHING MORE.

6. ON OUR SIDE, WE WERE FOR A WHILE HANDICAPPED BY INABILITY TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL, TIMELY INFORMATION
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ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. FORTUNATELY, THE DUTCH UNDERSTOOD. THEY SUCCESSFULLY TURNED TO LONDON AND NEVER RECIPROCATED BY HOLDING BACK THE PRODUCT OF EC-9 DISCUSSIONS. BRIEFINGS PROVIDED THE NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON EVENTUALLY RIGHTED THIS SITUATION.

7. ON CYPRUS THE PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL WAS EXTREMELY USEFUL. OUR MFA CONTACTS CONTINUE TO REFER TO THIS EXCHANGE AS A MODEL OF CONSTRUCTIVE CONSULTATIONS. WE HAD OCCASIONAL PROBLEMS IN GETTING TIMELY RESPONSES BUT THIS DID NOT DETRACT FROM ONE OF THE MORE SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF THE DIALOGUE.

8. ON THE EC-9 SIDE, THE KEY PROBLEM WAS THE FACT THAT ON MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES THERE SIMPLY WAS NO PROSPECT OF CHANGING NATIONAL POSITIONS TO ARRIVE AT A COMMON POLICY. THIS DIFFICULTY WAS AGGRAVATED BY THE HABIT OF KEEPING SOME ISSUES PERMANENTLY ON THE EC-9 AGENDA. WHILE THIS PRACTICE ON OCCASION MAY HAVE FACILITATED ADJUSTMENTS OF NATIONAL POLICIES TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF POSITIONS OF THE EC-9 PARTNERS, IT TOOK AWAY ONE POSSIBLE INCENTIVE FOR A COORDINATED POLICY. THE SUMMIT, TOO, WITH ITS CHARACTERISTIC BUT UNFORTUNATE LACK OF PREPARATORY WORK, SHOWED ITSELF ILL-SUITED FOR DECISION MAKING. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE DUTCH MFA WAS OFTEN REDUCED TO GIVING THIS EMBASSY REPORTS OF CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH NO CLEAR BEGINNING, MIDDLE OR END.

9. ANOTHER FACTOR LIMITING EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION WAS THE DIFFICULTY OF MESHING EC-9 AND WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATIC SCHEDULES. THE TIMETABLE OF EC-9 MEETINGS, SET MONTHS AHEAD, SELDOM DOVETAILED WITH THE WASHINGTON DECISION MAKING PROCESS. AS A RESULT, FRESH WASHINGTON VIEWS WERE SELDOM AVAILABLE FOR EC-9
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MEETINGS. MOREOVER, SUCH GUIDANCE AS WE DID GET MORE THAN ONCE CAME ONLY AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

10. AS SEEN FROM HERE, THE DIALOGUE IN NEW YORK WORKED WELL. GOVERNOR SCRANTON'S VISIT TO THE HAGUE SET THE STAGE FOR CLOSE COOPERATION WITH AMBASSADOR KAUFMAN AND HIS STAFF. MORE THAN EVER BEFORE THE NINE VOTED TOGETHER, THOUGH THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE MFA HAS UNCOVERED LESS EC COHESION THAN HAD BEEN ASSUMED. THE NINE ALSO GAVE SUPPORT ON MANY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE US. SIMILAR COOPERATION WAS EVIDENT AT THE UNESCO CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI. THERE HAS BEEN SOME CRITICISM, HOWEVER, OF OUR OCCASIONAL PRACTICE OF MAKING DEMARCHES TO THE OTHER EIGHT SIMULTANEOUS TO OUR APPROACHES TO THE DUTCH AS EC-9 PRESIDENT. THIS, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD, COMPLICATED DUTCH EFFORTS AT COORDINATION, NOT ALWAYS TO OUR ADVANTAGE. BUT IT IS CLEAR THE DIALOGUE HAS BECOME A USEFUL COORDINATING MECHANISM IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

11. THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS DURING THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY INEVITABLY HAD ITS EFFECT ON THE US-EC POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND LIMITED ITS PARAMETERS. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, DIFFERING INTERESTS AMONG THE NINE AND BUREAUCRATIC LIMITATIONS CONSPIRED TO FRUSTRATE THE US-EC NINE DIALOGUE. THE LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS--AMONG EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS AS WELL AS AT THE SUMMIT--ADDED TO THE DIFFICULTIES IN CAPITALIZING ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE DIALOGUE. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE DIALOGUE WAS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN THE US INPUT WAS CONCRETE AND WHEN THE EC-9, NOT HANDICAPPED BY RIGID NATIONAL POSITIONS, COULD ARRIVE AT A COMMON POSITION.

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12. WE AGREE WITH USEC THAT ON BALANCE MARGINAL
IMPROVEMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE, BUT WE STILL HAVE SOME
DISTANCE TO GO BEFORE WE CAN CALL IT A TRUE DIALOGUE.
PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT BY WASHINGTON POLICY-MAKING
OFFICIALS WILL REMAIN A ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT. ON SOME
ISSUES, AS THE CYPRUS CASE ILLUSTRATES, HIGH-LEVEL
EXCHANGES CAN BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE. THE DIALOGUE CARRIED
OUT IN THE CAPITAL OF THE PRESIDENCY WOULD PROBABLY GAIN
IN DEPTH AND EFFECTIVENESS IF WE WERE TO ADOPT A SOMEWHAT
SELECTIVE APPROACH, SPEAKING UP WHEN WE HAVE SOMETHING
SIGNIFICANT TO SAY, OR A SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE IN MIND.
IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO BUILD ON EUROPEAN EXPECTATIONS
OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WITH A SUSTAINED EFFORT
TO IMPROVE THE US-EC DIALOGUE IN 1977.
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